## "The Potts".   Roy Gault.
The "Potteries, Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway Co."

Conceived originally in 1860 as the 'Yest Midland, Shrewsbury & Coast of Wales Railway", its objective was to reach Portmadoc (for Ireland), via Kinnerley, Porthywaen and the Tanat Valley. The route also involved an ambitious tunnel through the Berwyn Mountains. Although this particular scheme failed, it was soon followed by the "West Shropshire Mineral Railway Company" which obtained an Act in 1863 to connect Llanymynech with Shrewsbury. The company was later renamed the "Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway Company".
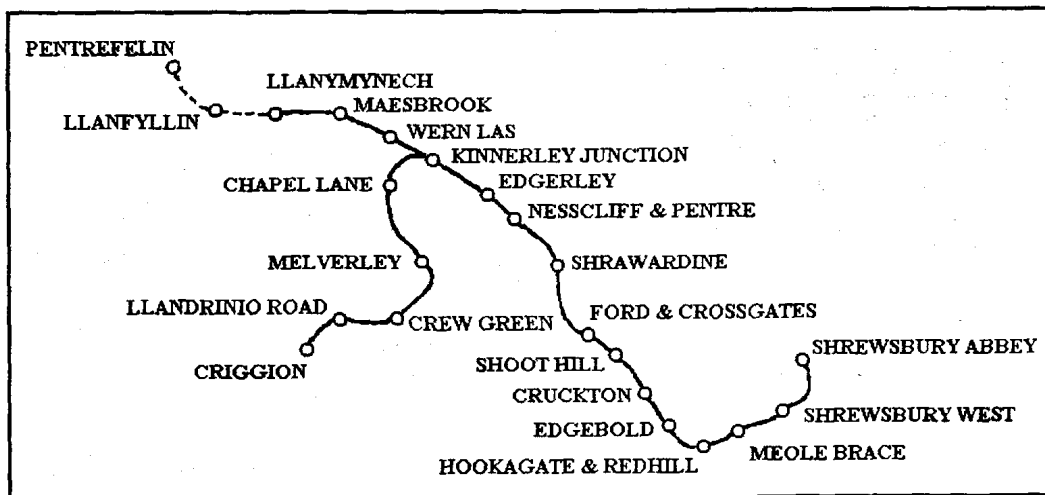

The line from Nantmawr to Shrewsbury (21 miles) was built by the constructor R S France between 1864 and 1866. A branch line from Kinnerley to Criggion (6 miles) was also constructed to transport the green basalt quarried at Criggion.

The "Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway Company" amalgamated with the "Potteries and Shrewsbury Junction Railway", a railway company set up specifically to connect Stoke-on-Trent with Shrewsbury via Market Drayton. The resulting company was called the **"Potteries, Shrewsbury and North Wales Railway Co"**. The line opened to passenger traffic from Llanymynech to Shrewsbury (and for freight throughout) on 13th August 1866.

Unfortunately, the railway did not prosper and the connection from Shrewsbury to Stoke-on-Trent never materialised. The line closed to all traffic on 22nd June 1880 and then abandoned. Even though the railway never reached Stoke-on-Trent, it was always known 'affectionately' as "The Pods".

1870-1872

One perfin die is thought to have been used by the company during the early 1870s. Just two examples are known, both on QV ld Reds (plates 122 & 145), one with a '708' duplex postmark for Shrewsbury. The die was almost certainly made by J Sloper & Co during the 'monopoly' period.
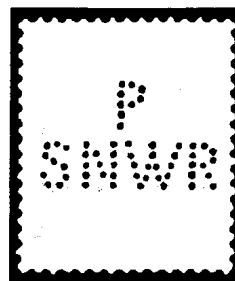
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Subsequent History of the Railway.

In 1888 the derelict "Potteries, Shrewsbury & North Wales Railway Co" was sold to the "Shropshire Railways Co" who on 19th September 1890, started re-building the line between Shrewsbury and Llanymynech. However, due to financial difficulties, the work ceased on 15th July 1891 and the line abandoned for the second time.

Next on the scene was the "Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway Co". Formed in 1909, with Colonel Holman Stephens as the engineer, to reconstruct <u>as a light railway</u> the long abandoned lines of the "Shropshire Railways Co". Work commenced in September 1910, and the line from Shrewsbury to Llanymynech opened to both passenger and freight traffic on 14th April 1911. The entire system closed to passengers on 6th November 1933.

In July 1941 the War Department took over the "Shropshire & Montgomeryshire Light Railway" and operated both military and civilian freight traffic.

The line finally closed to all traffic on 29th February 1960, and the track removed except for a short spur into Shrewsbury Abbey Station, which was used as a goods depot by British Railways. I believe Abbey station is due for demolition (2003).